

HOUSE BILL 3791

By Pruitt

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 37-3-703 and Title 68, Chapter 5, relative to health screening of children.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 68, Chapter 5, is amended by adding Sections 3 through 7 of this act as a new part.

SECTION 2. The general assembly finds and declares the following:

(1) That hearing loss occurs in newborns more frequently than any other health condition for which newborn screening is currently required;

(2) That early detection of hearing loss, early intervention, and early follow-up have been demonstrated to be highly effective in encouraging development of a child's health and communication and cognitive skills; and

(3) That such early screening and intervention will serve the public purposes of promoting healthy development of children and reducing public expenditures for health care, special education and related services.

SECTION 3. As used in this part, "hearing screening" or "hearing screening test" means that such screening or test shall be provided in accordance with current hearing screening standards established by a nationally recognized organization such as the Joint Committee on Infant Hearing Screening of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

SECTION 4. Every newborn infant shall be screened for hearing loss in order to prevent the consequences of unidentified hearing loss unless the parent or parents of the child object on the grounds that the test would conflict with the parent or parents' religious tenets or practices.

SECTION 5. A child born in a hospital shall be screened for hearing loss prior to discharge from that facility. The attending health care professional shall refer a child born in a

setting other than a hospital to the department of health for hearing screening. The hearing screening test shall be provided in accordance with current hearing screening standards established by a nationally recognized organization such as the Joint Committee on Infant Hearing Screening of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

SECTION 6. The hospital conducting the hearing screening test or the department of health shall refer any child who does not pass the hearing screening test to the Tennessee early intervention system of the department of education for follow up.

SECTION 7. The department of health, in consultation with the department of education, shall promulgate rules and regulations in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act, compiled in Title 4, Chapter 5, to effectuate the provisions of this act.

SECTION 8. If any provision of this act or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of the act which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to that end the provisions of this act are declared to be severable.

SECTION 9. For purposes of promulgating rules and regulations, this act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it. For all other purposes, this act shall take effect July 1, 2008, the public welfare requiring it.